

Purchasing pink isn't as helpful as you think

Staff Editorial

October is breast cancer awareness month and with that comes a flood of pink out games, races for the cure, and a little pink ribbon on almost everything you see.

Raising awareness for breast cancer has almost become a fad, but how effective is all this pink when it comes to actually "raising awareness"?

Although it is challenging to determine how effective the pink marketing is for each individual person, it's proven to be an effective money maker for companies across the country.

According to an article from the Boston Globe Magazine, "Research from Cone Communications, a Boston consultancy that helped pioneer the widespread use of cause marketing, has shown that 79 percent of consumers would likely switch to a brand that supports a cause, all other things being equal."

These companies that "support pink" may just be supporting their yearly bonus check.

Some companies, like Staples, who sells pink paper clips that "represent the fight against breast cancer" do just that. Represent.

No portion of the proceeds from this product actually go to finding a cure.

However, some of Staples products do actually help support the search for a cure. According to the Staples website, Ampad will be donating "a portion" of the proceeds from their Pink Ribbon Writing Pad to the Breast Cancer Research Foundation.

Other products, like Post-It Notes, 3M Mouse Pads, and Scotch Tape dispensers are a little more specific.

The Staples website claims that these brands are donating between 25 and 50 cents from each purchase to "the City of Hope for breast cancer

research".

Though this may (or may not) seem like a reasonable and fair donation, other items on the website have a little asterisk next to them.

For example, the asterisk next to the Staples Pink Ribbon Tape Dispenser says "*Up to \$100,000 through December 31, 2013". Any profit off of this item after that \$100,000 or after December 31, 2013, which was almost two years ago, will go to where it would go if it was just a regular tape dispenser.

But these products aren't the only ways to help "support" the cause.

All year round, walks and runs are organized to, "race for the cure" by organizations such as the Susan G. Komen Foundation.

According to the Susan G. Komen website, the foundation started in 1980 when Nancy Brinker promised her dying sister, Susan, that she would do everything she could to end breast cancer. Starting with only \$200 in 1982 the foundation began and has since then invested more than \$2.5 billion into the foundation.

The mission, also from their website, is "To save lives and end breast cancer forever by empowering others, ensuring quality care for all and investing in science to find the cures."

In 2014, they claimed to use 83% of the money they raised investing in their mission and only 17% of it towards "fundraising and admin" costs.

However, these numbers have adjusted recently to only 80% towards their mission and 20% towards "fundraising and admin" costs.

Still, this sounds like a lot of money going towards a good cause, right? Well, unfortunately, not quite.

In early 2012, Komen announced it was pulling grants that funded

breast cancer screenings at Planned Parenthood. After a few days of immediate backlash from Komen supporters, the foundation reversed the decision.

In August of that year, the CEO and founder, Brinker, announced her resignation from her position.

However, over three years later, Brinker is still the CEO.

In 2011, Brinker received a salary of \$417,712. But after the controversy in 2012, when donations dropped and almost half of the races were cancelled, Brinker received a 64% raise to a salary of \$684,000, according to an NBC article.

It seems like there are a lot of untruthful companies claiming to support finding a cure. But it is almost impossible to know who is or isn't being honest for sure.

This doesn't mean that you should stop wearing pink, or keep your change instead of putting it in the box at the register. But there are plenty of other ways to raise awareness about breast cancer.

The American Cancer Society recommends that women begin getting annual mammograms at the age of 40. Preventative care can help to reduce the risk of breast cancer becoming fatal.

Doctors also suggest that women begin breast self-exams starting in their 20s. It is especially important for women who have a family history of breast cancer to be checked regularly.

Despite the fact that wearing pink may not actually raise awareness about breast cancer, preventative education may help to end the fight.

For more information on breast cancer, visit www.cancer.org/cancer/breastcancer

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Breast Cancer by the Numbers

1 in 8 women in the US will be diagnosed with invasive breast cancer in their lifetime



2 most common risk factors for getting breast cancer are **being female** and **getting older**

being female and **getting older**

Possible warning signs of breast cancer may include lumps, hard knots or thickening inside the breast or underarm area

there will be about **40,290** deaths from breast cancer

Information from the Susan G. Komen Foundation and The American Cancer Society

fewer than **5%** of breast cancers occur in women under **40** years old

About **231,840** women will be diagnosed with invasive breast cancer in 2015

Graphic by Madi Pohlman

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Dear Editor,
I really enjoyed the stories about sport. I also enjoyed listening to peoples opinions over the new school times.
My favorite story in the paper was wonderwall because I live right next to the beercade. The only thing I didn't like was all the talk about one thing, the school times.
-Jackson Vaughn, 9th grade

Dear Editor,
One thing I am not into is how cold the building gets. There are different types of people who can and can't work with different types of temps. Many people can't. Like me, when it gets too cold I won't be able to focus and I'll get distracted. There are many people who do the same thing. And I feel like there's no reason it should be that cold.
-Taylor Smithson, 9th grade

Dear Editor,
[I liked] the article of Beyond the Normal attraction. I think this article is very informative and I think it sheds more light on the situation. Also I think you used great wording.
-Makhilla Gerken, 9th grade

*Submit Letters to the Editor to Ms. Aerts in room 265 or online at www.opsnorthstar.com

Letters to the editor